

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 & 2 SAMUEL

Sermon Discussion Guide

Read the week's passage aloud before discussing together.

- January 21 – 1 Samuel 1
- January 28 – 1 Samuel 2:1-11
- February 4 – 1 Samuel 2:12-3:21
- February 11 – 1 Samuel 4:1-7:2
- February 18 – 1 Samuel 7:3-17
- February 25 – 1 Samuel 8-9
- March 17 - 1 Samuel 10-11
- March 24 - 1 Samuel 12-13

OBSERVATION

1. What are your personal observations about the passage?
 - What sticks out to you (words, phrases, concepts, themes)?
 - Why do these things stick out to you?
 - Does it remind you of other Bible passages?
2. Examine the context of the passage:
 - What's happening in the book before and after the passage?
 - What's going on in history at the time of the passage?
 - What type of literature or genre is the passage?
3. What was one of your main takeaways from Sunday's sermon?

INTERPRETATION

4. What questions does this passage raise for you? How would your group answer them based on what they see in the Bible (this text and others) and what was shared in the sermon?

APPLICATION

5. How should you apply this passage to your life? Consider how it applies to your thoughts, attitudes, habits, decisions, relationship with God, and relationship with others.

FURTHER RESOURCES

Commentary: [1 Samuel](#) by S.A. Fix & J. Robert Vannoy (TGC Commentary online)

Video: ["Overview of 1 Samuel" from BibleProject](#)

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 14-15

April 14, 2024

By Pastor Mitch DePoy

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

In chapters 14-15 of 1 Samuel, we read of Jonathan's trust in God in comparison to Saul's failure as king over Israel. God is looking for a leader who trusts in him and obeys his word, which are marks of true faith. Saul's lack of obedience, despite outward religiosity, is a rejection of God himself, so Saul is rejected as king.

READ

Take turns reading aloud through 1 Samuel 14.

DISCUSS

1. Contrast the leadership of Jonathan and Saul in this chapter. Does the narrator portray each of them favorably or unfavorably? Use adjectives to describe them.
2. Focusing on Jonathan's words in verses 6-10, why was Jonathan willing, against great odds, to attack the Philistine outpost? What does this section tell us about God?
3. What seemingly insurmountable circumstances are you facing in life? In what areas do you need to trust the Lord, who works for us and can't be hindered (v. 6)?

READ

Take turns reading aloud through 1 Samuel 15.

DISCUSS

1. Is it wrong for God to order the destruction of the Amalekites? Why or why not? (For help with this question, refer to Deut. 25:17-19, Gen. 18:25, and also "[CPCi Forum: The Polygamy Problem](#).") What does God's judgment in this chapter tell us about his nature?
2. According to the text, why did Saul disregard the Lord's command, sparing Agag and the best of the animals? In what ways are we subject to the same temptations as Saul? Give examples from your own life.
3. How do the examples of Jonathan and Saul point us to the gospel?

PRAY

1. Jesus is God's king who obeys God's word, saves God's people, and judges God's enemies. Praise God for his holiness and his love.
2. Confess areas of your life where you are lacking trust in God, fearing men instead of God, or disobeying God's Word.
3. Thank God for his grace and forgiveness in Christ. Ask God, by his Spirit, to preserve you from the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12-15).

PREPARE

Before next Sunday's sermon, read 1 Samuel 16-17 and reflect on the following:

1. God's rationale for not choosing Eliab is "the LORD looks on the heart." What is meant by this?
2. Is the story of David and Goliath meant to inspire us to "slay the giants in our lives"?

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 16-17

April 21, 2024

By Pastor Mitch DePoy

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

In chapters 16-17, we meet the king we've been waiting for (2:10; 2:25, 13:14, 15:28). In contrast with Saul, who was the king for whom the people asked (8:20; 12:13), David was the man after God's own heart (13:14) who was chosen by the Lord to defeat his enemies and deliver his people.

READ

Take turns reading aloud through 1 Samuel 16.

DISCUSS

1. According to John Woodhouse¹, verse 7 is rendered literally: "... for man sees according to the eyes, but the LORD sees according to the heart." God's perspective isn't based on human values, but his own sovereign will and purposes. God's choice of David wasn't the result of God's place in David's heart but David's place in God's heart. What implications does God's election have for our own faith?
2. Verse 13 says, "And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward." Similarly, through the ministry of the chosen king David, the spiritually sick Saul is made well (vv. 14-23). How are these verses a picture of the ministry of Jesus?
3. If there's one area in your life where you need Jesus to give spiritual empowerment, what would it be?

READ

Take turns reading aloud through 1 Samuel 17.

DISCUSS

1. Verses 4-7 give a detailed description of the giant Goliath. He was covered with a coat of "mail," the same word in Hebrew for "scales." Several times we're told his armor was "bronze," which sounds like the Hebrew word for "serpent." Why is it significant that the narrator portrays Goliath with serpent-like language?
2. Focus on David's words to Saul in verses 32-37. Why is David confident God will give him victory over the Philistines? How has God used trials in your life to grow your faith? How does his past faithfulness encourage you in your present trial?
3. According to David's words in verses 45-47, what was the ultimate purpose for his victory over Goliath? Did Saul or God's people deserve deliverance?
4. How did the people respond to David's victory in verses 52-53? Contrast this to verses 11, 24, and 32. What brought about such change? In light of our deliverance through Christ, in what ways are we called to go on the offensive?

¹Woodhouse, John, and R. Kent Hughes. 1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader. Wheaton, Crossway, 2014, p. 286.

PRAY

1. Praise God for the victory he has given us in Christ.
2. Pray that all the earth may know this salvation.
3. Pray to see according to God's heart versus human eyes and for spiritual empowerment.

PREPARE

Before next Sunday's sermon, read 1 Samuel 18-20 and reflect on the following:

1. Why would Jonathan be willing to abdicate his throne to David?
2. How much are you willing to sacrifice for God's anointed king Jesus?

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 18-20

April 28, 2024

By Pastor Bob Martin

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

1 Samuel 18-20 features seven scenes that display God's provision for David—through the love of many and despite the animosity of King Saul.

1. We see the start of David and Jonathan's covenant friendship (1 Sam. 18:1-5).
2. The women of the city sing a victory song that leads King Saul to anger, fear, and jealousy about David's success and the Lord's favor (1 Sam. 18:6-16).
3. King Saul attempts twice to destroy David by marrying him off to his daughters—in the hopes that he will engage the Philistines and be killed by them. But by God's power, David kills twice as many Philistines as Saul expects (1 Sam. 18:17-30).
4. Jonathan is used by God to save David's life (1 Sam. 19:1-7).
5. David's wife Michal is used by God to save David's life (1 Sam. 19:8-17).
6. The prophet Samuel is used by God to help save David's life (1 Sam. 19:18-24).
7. Jonathan and David resolve a plan to have David hide while Jonathan goes solo to the royal dinner in order to evaluate if Saul really wants to kill David. Saul blows up, and Jonathan shoots arrows in a field to warn David that he has no choice but to be exiled and run for his life (1 Sam. 20:1-42).

READ

Take turns reading through 1 Samuel 18-20 as a group. Have a volunteer summarize the stories in each chapter.

DISCUSS

1. In 18:1-5, what are some of the unique actions that Jonathan makes with David in their relationship? Why do you think Jonathan was so "knit" to David? In what ways are Jonathan and David similar? In which of your friendships do you feel especially close? Which of your friendships do you feel are focused on the Lord (and how so)? Have you ever felt the deep friendship of Jesus to you? When?
2. In 18:6-16, what words are used of Saul's disposition? How do his actions reveal Saul's inner disposition? Is he acting more like Israel's king or the kings of the nations? Where does envy show up in your life? Anger? Fear of others' success?
3. Why are the repeated statements of David's "success" and that the "Lord was with him" important (18:5, 12-16, 28-30)? Do these echo other Old Testament individuals that God used despite putting them through challenging seasons (Jacob: Gen. 30:43; Joseph: Gen. 39:2-4)? How do you know if the Lord is giving you "success" in your life (job, home life, etc.)? Have you ever had a season where you felt this?

4. In chapter 19, in what ways does God use Jonathan, then Michal, and then Samuel to save David's life? Should Israel's king have his son, daughter, and prophet against him? Are you willing to risk your life, safety, and resources for your friends? Have you ever had to do this?
5. In chapter 20, how many times do David and Jonathan mention the Lord or God? How does this contrast with the way Saul talks (v. 30-31)? Are you quick or slow to mention or point to the Lord in your conversation with others? What is one way you can speak more about the Lord and his work?

PRAY

1. Praise God for the gift of Jesus's friendship: truly laying down his life for our good and then promising to be "with us always."
2. Pray for God to turn your heart away from envy, anger, and fear and incline you to trust in his purposes even when it's hard.
3. Praise God that he is with us even when we suffer. Ask him that you might have the level of "success" he desires and pray that you'll submit to him no matter what.
4. Pray that the relationships in your group would become so strong that you would be willing to "lay down your lives" for one another.
5. Praise God for being the center of our lives and being in total sovereign control of finishing his kingdom purposes through Jesus.

PREPARE

Before next Sunday's sermon, read 1 Samuel 21-22 along with Psalms 34 and 57. Consider difficult seasons in your own life and how the Lord has been faithful through them.

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 21-22

May 5, 2024

By Pastor Jeff Ballard

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

In 1 Samuel 21-22, we read of some very dark days in Israel's history. Though David had been anointed as king and had rescued Israel from the Philistines by defeating Goliath, he is now on the run for his life from Saul, whose narcissistic descent continues. Not only is he seeking to kill David, but he even orders the slaughter of eighty-five priests of the Lord. It's also important to note that Psalms 34, 52, 56, 57, and 142 are probably written during these times.

READ

Take turns reading aloud through 1 Samuel 21. Also read Psalm 34 which was probably written during the time of 1 Samuel 21:10-15.

DISCUSS

1. What might be the significance of the holy bread given to David as he sets out on the run from Saul?
2. List the convictions about God which David declares in Psalm 34. How are each of these convictions relevant to his situation in Gath?
3. In what ways has the Lord provided for you in a situation when you were desperate?

READ

Take turns reading aloud through 1 Samuel 22. Also read Psalm 57 which was probably written during the time of 1 Samuel 22:1-5.

DISCUSS

1. What differences between Saul and David do you observe in chapter 22? In what ways might David be pointing to Jesus, the true and better king?
2. In Psalm 57, how does David describe his circumstances? Amidst such difficulties, how was David able to write, "I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations" (v. 9)?
3. In chapter 22, Saul aligns himself with a long line of archenemies who violently oppose God's people (Pharaoh, Balaam and Balak, Jezebel, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod). And yet, when he orders Doeg to kill the priests of the Lord, this wicked action fulfills God's word in 1 Samuel 2:31-36. In what ways is this truth uncomfortable? In what ways does it bring comfort?

PRAY

1. In the same way that David was very different from Saul, praise King Jesus for the ways that he is so different from the rulers of this world.
2. Praise God for the ways he has provided for you in dark and desperate times. And if you're in a season like that now, ask him for what you need to sustain you.

3. Pray that in dark and desperate times the Lord would help you see his steadfast love and praise him like David does in Psalms 34 and 57.

PREPARE

Before next Sunday's sermon, read 1 Samuel 23-24 and reflect on the following:

1. What is surprising to you about the story of David as it unfolds in chapters 23-24?
2. If you were in David's shoes when he had the chance to kill Saul in the cave, what would you have done?

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 23-24

May 12, 2024

By Pastor Mitch DePoy

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

1 Samuel 23-24 features three scenes. With God's help, David saves the inhabitants of Keilah from the Philistines but is forced to flee the city when he learns of their intention to betray him to Saul. On the run in the wilderness of Ziph, David is encouraged by his friend Jonathan but is forced to flee again when the Ziphites disclose David's whereabouts to Saul. Saul finally catches up with David near Engedi but unknowingly enters a cave where David and his men are hiding. Despite a golden opportunity to save himself, David spares Saul's life as an expression of respect for God's authority and trust in God's timing for him to become king.

READ

Take turns reading through 1 Samuel 23-24. Have a volunteer summarize the stories in each chapter.

DISCUSS

1. In 23:1-14, why is David successful against the Philistines at Keilah? How does he know to escape from Keilah into the wilderness? What action of David is repeated multiple times in this section? As believers today, how can we discern God's will and invite his help?
2. How did Jonathan comfort David in the wilderness of Ziph? What lessons can we learn from that? Share with the group a time in your life when the presence of a friend "strengthened your hand in God" during a difficult season.
3. Why didn't David kill Saul in the cave when he had the chance? What would you have done? Did David's decision make his circumstances easier or harder? Share with the group a time in your life when you had to wait on the Lord and his timing? What was the result?
4. How does David's kindness towards Saul point to the gospel? Is Saul's response worldly sorrow or godly repentance? What is the difference? What is the appropriate response to the undeserved grace of God's anointed king, his Messiah?

PRAY

1. Praise God for mercifully sparing our souls and saving us in Christ.
2. Praise God that he hears our prayers and rewards those who earnestly seek him.
3. Pray for those in the group needing guidance from the Lord regarding a big decision.
4. Pray for those in the group who need their hand strengthened in God.
5. Ask God for patience and endurance as we wait for his kingdom to come.

PREPARE

Before next Sunday's sermon, read 1 Samuel 25-26 and reflect on the following:

1. What motivates the actions of David, Nabal, and Abigail in chapter 25?
2. Was David's response to Nabal's disrespect justified? Was he right or wrong?

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 25-26

May 19, 2024

By Kimberly Miller

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

Following the death of Samuel, David retreats to the wilderness of Paran. Despite aiding a rich man, Nabal, David's kindness is foolishly treated with contempt. David seeks vengeance on Nabal and his household, but Nabal's wife Abigail wisely intervenes, saving her own household and preventing David from "working salvation with his own hand" (v. 33). In chapter 26, David once again spares King Saul, refusing to put his hand against the Lord's anointed (v. 9). The dominant theme in both chapters is David's refusal to make himself king. His ascent is God's doing.

READ

Take turns reading through 1 Samuel 25-26. Have a volunteer summarize the stories in each chapter.

DISCUSS

1. Why do you think David was guarding Nabal's possessions? What were his motivations? Was his response to Nabal's foolishness appropriate? What clues in the text suggest otherwise?
2. Discuss Abigail's decision to defy her husband and help David. What were her motivations? Was she right or wrong in doing this? Discuss a time in your life when you had to defy authority to be faithful to God.
3. Despite initially acting rashly (like King Saul), David relents in response to Abigail's appeal. He is not like Saul. He trusts God to fulfill his promises in his way and in his timing. Chapter 26 demonstrates a similar principle, as David's refusal to avenge himself on King Saul shows his trust in God's ability to save and judge. Discuss this theme in light of Romans 12:18-21. Share a time in your life when you chose to show kindness and forgiveness towards an enemy who didn't deserve it.
4. In what ways do these stories point us to the gospel? In what ways do David's faults in chapter 25 (vv. 33, 43) foreshadow future events in 1 & 2 Samuel? How does this point to the need for a divine King? In what ways are we tempted to "work salvation with our own hands"?

PRAY

1. Praise God for his sovereignty and justice.
2. Thank God for his kindness and forgiveness towards the undeserving in the gospel.
3. Ask God for grace to love our enemies and entrust ourselves to one who judges justly.
4. Ask God to restrain us from sin and deliver us from evil.
5. Ask God for wisdom and discernment like Abigail's.

PREPARE

Before next Sunday's sermon, read 1 Samuel 27-28 and reflect on the following:

1. How can David's actions (seeking refuge from Israel's enemy, eradicating people groups, lying to Achish, etc.) in chapter 27 be explained?
2. How can we ensure we do not end up like Saul, an enemy of God (v. 16) whom the Lord turns away from and does not answer (v. 6)?

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 27-28

June 2, 2024

By Kimberly Miller

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

Not surprisingly, Saul's worldly sorrow for his sin and blessing of David (1 Sam. 26:21-25) does not live long in his heart. What is surprising, however, is David's response in chapter 27. Despite seeing the Lord's hand of deliverance from Saul time and again, David seems to give way to fear and discouragement, seeking asylum amidst the Philistines. He spends months living in enemy territory, away from God's people and likely far from God, which leads to some morally questionable actions (27:10-11). In chapter 28, Saul's tragic end is upon us. Fueled by fear, Saul makes an extreme decision to seek the help of a medium. Samuel's appearance in the story after his death is frightening (v. 13), but not as frightening as Saul's willingness to listen to a medium (v. 23) but not to the voice of the Lord (v. 18). Saul is spiritually and morally bankrupt.

READ

Read through 1 Samuel 27-28 individually. Have a volunteer summarize the stories in each chapter.

DISCUSS

1. Discuss David's fear-based decision to leave Israel. Why do you think David seemed to lose faith in God's promises and forget God's past faithfulness? Have you ever been tempted to doubt God's faithfulness in your own life? Share with the group.
2. During his time in Ziklag, David became a mercenary for Achish, killing and raiding Gentile people groups living in Israelite territory. When questioned, David deceived Achish into thinking he had attacked Israelites. Were David's actions morally justified?
3. Saul was terrified of the Philistine army and David's alliance with them. What happened when he sought the Lord? Why would Saul now seek a medium when he had earlier expelled them from the land (28:3)? What was Saul ultimately seeking? Have you ever desired answers from God more than a relationship with God?
4. Fear is a major theme in both stories. David and Saul both show what happens when we choose to live without God. How does God's Word speak to our fears in light of the gospel of Jesus? As the Spirit brings verses to mind, share them with the group.

PRAY

1. Praise God that he provides comfort and hope during times of fear.
2. Praise God for examples of his faithfulness in the past.
3. Confess areas where you are presently lacking trust in God.
4. Thank God for his forgiveness and favor because of Jesus.
5. Ask God for help in overcoming our fears.
6. Ask to be a faithful witness for him during our times of exile.

PREPARE

Before next Sunday's sermon, read 1 Samuel 29-30 and reflect on the following:

- Would David have fought against his own people had the Philistine leaders not opposed him?

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 29-30

June 9, 2024

By Keyon Atkins

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

In chapters 29-30, David is rejected by the Philistine leaders and is providentially spared from fighting against his own people. Upon his rejection, David returns to Ziklag which has been raided. This tragic event seems to bring spiritual renewal to David's life, as he turns to God and finds strength. David calls on the Lord, who leads him to victory over the Amalekites and restores all that was taken. Even those who did not fight share in the riches won by the Lord's anointed. The major themes of these chapters are faith in suffering, repentance, God's providence, and grace.

READ

Take turns reading through 1 Samuel 29-30 as a group. Have a volunteer summarize the stories in each chapter.

DISCUSS

1. Would David have fought against his own people in chapter 29? Although God isn't mentioned in the chapter, his providence preserved David from the unthinkable. How has God preserved you from ungodly paths? Share with the group.
2. David's time living in Philistia seems to have been a dark chapter. David hits rock bottom when he finds Ziklag in ruins and his family taken captive by the Amalekites. God, however, uses this hardship to restore David's dependence and trust in him (30:6-9). Has this ever happened in your life? Share a time when you found strength in God despite extraordinary hardship.
3. What role does God play in chapter 30? What do we see God doing?
4. Explore the theme of forgiveness and reconciliation in chapter 30 as David is led to repentance and later extends mercy to his men, allowing all to share in the plunder. What can we learn from David's response in these situations? How does this point us to the gospel? Share a story of forgiveness and reconciliation from your own life.

PRAY

1. Pray for the Spirit to preserve you from sin.
2. Pray for yourself and others who need strength from God.
3. Pray for the Lord to guide you in your decision-making.
4. Pray for the Lord to protect you and deliver you from the Evil One.
5. Pray for the Lord to help you forgive as you have been forgiven.

PREPARE

Before next Sunday's sermon, read 1 Samuel 31 and reflect on the following:

1. How does the legacy of Saul contrast with David?
2. How does Saul's story challenge us to examine our leadership qualities, decision-making processes, and reliance on God's guidance in our lives and endeavors?

THE WEIGHT OF THE CROWN

1 Samuel 31

June 16, 2024

By Keyon Atkins and Pastor Mitch DePoy

1 & 2 SAMUEL

OVERVIEW

Following David's victory over the Amalekites, the scene returns to Saul and the battle with the Philistines. In this chapter, we see the tragic end of Saul's reign and life. As the Philistines close in and Saul faces death, he kills himself rather than facing capture. He falls on his sword, the people of Israel are exiled, and the Philistines overtake the land. They put Saul's body on display as a statement of victory, and his armor (and head) becomes a relic of idolatry. The news is proclaimed, inspiring worship of the Philistine gods. But some valiant men give Saul a proper burial.

READ

Take turns reading through 1 Samuel 31 as a group.

DISCUSS

1. What are the biggest themes in this chapter?
2. Read 1 Samuel 28:18-19 and 1 Chronicles 10:13-14. Why did God's judgment come upon Saul? What can we learn about God and his word from these verses? What should we do as a result?
3. Verse 6 contains a simple statement which serves as one of the themes of the chapter, "Thus Saul died." The same statement will be made of every human being. Consider the commentary on Saul's life and death in 1 Chronicles 10:13-14. What do you want the commentary on your life to be? Does your life currently reflect the commentary you desire? Why or why not?
4. In verse 4 just before he died, Saul gave a rational for taking his own life. What was it? What does this say about Saul's character? What should he have done in the end? Would God have forgiven him had he repented?
5. Compare verses 11-13 and John 19:38-42. How does the death of Saul, an antichrist figure, point to the death of Jesus and the good news about him?

PRAY

1. Praise God that he is always true to his word.
2. Praise God for his holiness and justice.
3. Pray that the leaders in your life will believe in the Lord and humbly seek his will.
4. Pray that the commentary shared about your life when you die will bring glory to God.
5. Pray that God's kindness will lead the people in your life to repentance.
6. Praise God for the good news about Jesus that inspires our worship.

PREPARE

To prepare for the summer sermon series, *Us: The Core of Who We Are*, read through [College Park's Core Values](#).